

THE ³
RECONCILER.

AN EPISTLE
PACIFICATORIE

of the seeming differences of
opinion concerning the true-
nesse and visibility of the Ro-
man Church

By Ios: EXON.



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SECTION 10

TO THE

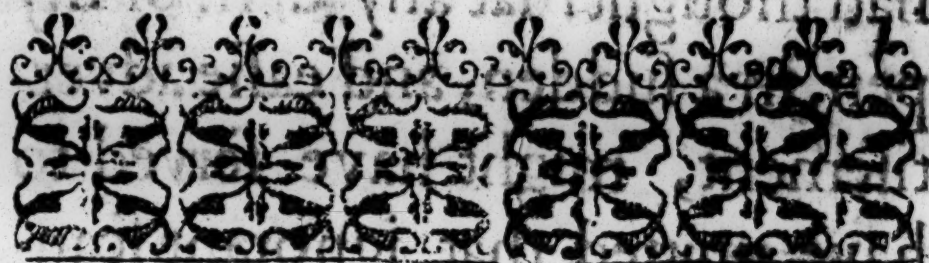
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TO
THE RIGHT HO-
NOVRABLE, AND

truly religious, my singular

good Lord, Edward Earle

of *Derby*.

My ever honored Lord;



Confesse my
charity led me
into an error;
Your Lord-
shippe well
knows how
apt I am to be
overtaken with these better de-
ceits of an over kinde credulity. I

had thought that any dash of my
 pen, in a sudden, and easie adver-
 tisement, might have served to
 have quitted that ignorant scan-
 dall, which was cast upon my
 mistaken assertion, of the true vi-
 sibility of the Romane Church.
 The issue proves all otherwise:
 I finde, to my grieve, that the mis-
 understanding tenacitie of some
 zealous spirits hath made it a
 quarrell. It cannot but trouble
 me to see that the position, which
 is so familiarly current with the
 best reformed Divines, & which
 hath bene so oft and long since
 published by mee without con-
 tradiction, yea, not without the
 approbation and applause of the
 whole representative body of the
 Clergie of this kingdome, should
 now

now be quarrelled, and drawing
 into the detestation of those that
 know it not; As one therefore
 that should thinke it corrosive
 enough, that any occasion should
 be taken by ought of mine, to ra-
 vell but one thred of that seamless
 coat, I doe earnestly desire, by a
 more full explication, to give
 cleare satisfaction to all Readers;
 and by this seasonable reconcile-
 ment, to stop the flood-gates of
 contention; I know it will not be
 displeasing to your Lordship, that
 through your honorable and pi-
 ous hands, these welcome papers
 should be transmitted to many;
 Wherewith I shall first beseech, yea
 adjure all Christians, under whose
 eyes they shall fall, by the dreadfull
 name of that G O D, who shall
 : guide judge

judge both the quicke, and the dead, to lay aside all unjust prejudices; and to allow the words of Truth, and Peace; I dare confidently say, Let us be understood, and we are agreed.

The searcher of all hearts knows how far it was from my thoughts to speake, ought in favour of the Roman Synagogue. If I have not sufficiently branded that Strūper, I justly suffer. *Luthers* broad word is by me alread both safely construed, & sufficiently vindicated. But, doe you not say, It is a true visible Church? Do you not yeeld some kinde of communion with these clients of Antichrist? What is, if this be not, favour? Marke well, Christian Reader, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things:

Ob.

things : To beginne with the latter ; No man can say but the Church of Rome holds some Truths ; those truths are Gods, and in his right, ours, why should not wee challenge our owne, wheresoever we finde it ? If a verie Devill shall say of Christ, *Thou art the Sonne of the living God*, wee will snatch this truth out of his mouth, as usurped ; and in spight of him, proclaime it for our own. Indeed, there is no communion betwixt light and darknesse, but there is communion betwixt light and light ; Now all truth is light, and therefore symbolizeth with it selfe. With that light, therefore, whose glimmering yet remaines in their darknesse, our clearer light will, and must hold

com-

Resp.

communion; If they professe
 three Persons in one Godhead;
 two natures in one person of
 Christ; shall we detrect to joine
 with them in this Christian veri-
 tie? We abhorre to have any com-
 munion with them in their er-
 rors, in their idolatrous or super-
 stitious practices, these are their
 owne, not ours. If we durst have
 taken their part in these, this breach
 had not beene; Now, who can
 but say that yve must hate their e-
 vill, and allow their good? It is no
 countenance to their errors, that
 yve embrace our owne truths;
 It is no disparagement to our
 truths, that they have blended
 them with their errors: Here can
 be no difference, then if this com-
 munion bee not mistaken, no
 man

man will say that wee may sever
from their common truths; No
man will say that wee may joyne
with them in their hatefull er-
rours.

For the former; Hee that saith
a theefe is truly a man, doth hee
therein favour that theefe? He that
saith, a diseased, dropfied, dying
bodie, is a true (though corrupt)
body, doth he favour that disease,
or that living carcasle? It is no o-
ther, no more that I say of the
Church of Rome: Truenesse of
being, and outward visibility, are
no praise to her; Yea, these are ag-
gravations to her falshood: The
advantage that is both sought and
found in this assertion, is onely
ours, as we shall see in the sequell,
without any danger of their gain.

I say, then, that she is a true church, but, I say withall, shee is a false Church: True in existence, but false in beleefe: Let not the homonymie of a word breed jarres, where the sense is accorded: If we doe not yeeld her the true being of a Church, why do we call her the Church of Rome? What speake we of? or where is the subject of our question? who sees not that there is a morall trueness, and a naturall? He that is morally the falsest man, is, in nature, as truly a man, as the honestest; and therefore in this regard as true a man: In the same sense therefore that wee say the Devill is a true (though false) spirit, that a cheater is a true (thogh false) man, we may and must say, that the Church of
 Rome

Rome is a true (though false) Church; Certainly, there hath beene a true errour, and mistaking of the sense that is guiltie of this quarrell. As for the visibility, there can be no question: Would God, that Church did not too much fill our eie, yea the world; There is nothing wherein it doth more pride it selfe, than in a glorious conspicuitie, scorning, in this regard, the obscure paucitie of their opposers.

But you say, What is this but to play with ambiguities; That the Church of Rome is it selfe, that is, a Church; that it is visible; that it is truly existent, there can be no doubt; but is it still a part of the truly existent, visible church of Christ? Surely, no otherwise than

Ob.

Resp.

than an hereticall and Apostaticall
 Church is, and may be: Reader,
 whosoever thou art, for Gods
 sake, for thy soules sake, marke
 where thou treadest; Else thou
 shalt bee sure to fall either into an
 open gulfe of uncharitablenesse,
 or into a dangerous precipice of
 errour. There is no feare, nor fa-
 vour to say, that the Church of
 Rome, under a Christian face,
 hath an Antichristian heart; over-
 turning that foundation by neces-
 sarie inferences, which by open
 profession it avoweth: That face,
 that profession, those avowed
 principles are enough to give it
 claime to a true outward visibili-
 tie of a Christian Church; whiles
 those damnable inferences are e-
 nough to scoffe it in the true style
 of

of heresie, and Antichristianisme; Now, this heresie, this Antichristianisme makes Rome justly odious, and execrable to God, to Angels, and Men; but cannot utterly dischurch it; whiles those main principles maintaine a weake life in that crazie, and corrupted bodie.

But is not this language different from that whereto our eares and eies have beene inured, from the mouthes, and pens of some reverend Divines and professors of our Church? Know, Reader, that the streame of the famous Doctors, both at home, and abroad, hath runne strongly my way: I should have feared, and hated to goe alone; what reason is there then to single out one man

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in a throng? Some few worthie Authors have spoken otherwise, in the warmth of their zealous contention; yet so, as that even to them durst I appeale for my Iudges; for if their Iound differ from me, their sense agrees with mee; that, which as I touched in my Advertisement, so I am now ready to make cleare by the instance of learned *Zanchius*; whose pregnant testimonies compared together, shall plainly teach us, how easie a reconcilment may bee made betwixt these two, seemingly-contrarie, opinions. That worthie Author, in his profession of Christian Religion, which hee wrote, and published, in the 70. yeare of his age, having defined the Church of Christ in generall,

mi d and

and passed thorow the properties
of it, at last, descending to the sub-
division of the Church militant,
comes to inquire, how particular
Churches may be knowne to be
the true churches of Christ; wher-
of he determines thus. *Illas igitur,*
&c. Those Churches therefore
doe wee acknowledge for the
true Churches of Christ, in which
first of all, the pure doctrine of the
Gospell is preached, heard, admit-
ted; and so onely admitted, that
there is neither place, nor care gi-
ven to the contrarie: For both
these are the just propertie of the
flocke or sheepe of Christ; name-
ly, both to heare the voice of their
owne Pastor, and to reject the
voice of strangers. *Iohn 10. 4.* In
which, secondly, the Sacraments

instituted by Christ, are lawfully
 and (as much as may, bee) accor-
 ding to Christs institution, admi-
 nistred, and received; and there-
 fore; in which the Sacraments
 devised by men are not admitted;
 and allowed; In which lastly, the
 discipline of Christ hath the due
 place; that is, where both pub-
 liquely, and privately; charitable
 care is had, both by admonitions;
 corrections, and at last (if need be)
 by excommunications, that the
 Commandements of God be du-
 ly kept, and that all persons live
 soberly, justly, and piously, to the
 glorie of God, and edification of
 their Neighbour. Thus hee;
 wherein; who sees not how di-
 rectly he aims, both at the justi-
 fying of our Churches, and the

casheering of the Roman, which
 is palpably guiltie of the violation
 of these wholesome rules: and in
 deed, it must needs be said, if we
 bring the Roman Church to this
 touch, she is not for a meer coun-
 terfeit, she is as farre from truth,
 as truth is from falshood: Now
 by this time you goe away with
 an opinion that I learned Zanchie
 is my professed aduersarie, and
 hath directly condemned my por-
 sition, of the gruenesse, and visibi-
 litye of the Roman Church: I have
 but patience, I beseech you, to read
 what the same excellent Author
 writes, in his golden Preface to
 that noble worke, *De vera Dei*,
 where this question is clearly and
 punctually decided: in which you
 shall find, that having passed
 by you

through the wofull and gloomie
 offuscations of the Church of
 God, in all former ages, he, descen-
 ding to the darknesse of the pre-
 sent Babylon, concludes thus of
Deinde non potuit Satan, &c. More-
 over, Satan could not, in the vntie
 Roman Church, doe what he li-
 sted, as hee had done in the Eas-
 terne, to bring all things to such
 passe, as that it should no more
 haue the forme of a Christian
 Church; For, in spight of Satan,
 that Church retained still the chief
 foundations of the faith, although
 weakened with the doctrines of
 men, it retained the publique prea-
 ching of the word of God, though
 in many places misperstood,
 and misconstrued, the invocati-
 on of the name of Christ, though
 through joyned

joyned also with the invocation
of dead men; the administration
of Baptisme, instituted by Christ
himselſe, howſoever deſiled with
the addition of many ſuperſtiti-
ons. So as, together with the ſym-
bole of the covenant, the Cove-
nant it ſelſe remained ſtill in her;
I mean in all the Churches of the
Weſt, no otherwiſe than it did in
the Church of Iſrael, even after
that all things were in part proſa-
ned by *Ieroſoam*, and other impi-
ous, and idolatrous Kings, upon
the defection made by them from
the Church, and Tribe of *Juda*;
For, neither doe I aſſent to them
which would have the Church
of Rome to have no leſſe ceaſed
to be the Church of Chriſt, than
theſe Eaſterne Churches, which

afterwards turned Mahumetan;
 what Church was ever mote
 corrupt than the Church of the
 ten Tribes, yet we learne from the
 Scriptures, that it was still the
 Church of God? And how doth
 Saint Paul call that Church, wher-
 in Antichrist (hee saith) shall sit,
 the Temple of God? neither is it
 any Baptisme at all, that is admini-
 stred out of the Church of Christ.
 The wife that is an Adulteresse,
 doth not cease to be a wife, unless
 being despoiled of her marriage-
 ring, she be manifestly divorced.
 The Church of Rome, therefore,
 is yet the Church of Christ; but
 what manner of Church? Surely
 so corrupted and depraved, and
 with so great tyrannie oppressed;
 that you can neither, with a good
 con-

conscience, partake with them, in
 their holy things, nor safely dwell
 amongst them. Thus he againe;
 wherein you see hee speaks as
 home for me, as I could devise to
 speake for my selfe, and as appo-
 sitely professeth to oppose the
 contrarie; yett shall I reuolue
 and Looke, now, how this learned
 Author may be reconciled to his
 owne pen; and by the verie same
 way, shall my pen be reconciled
 with others. Either he agrees not
 with himselfe, or else, in his sense,
 I agree with my gainesayers. No-
 thing is more plaine, than that hee
 in that former speech, and all o-
 ther blasphemous Authors, that speake
 in that Key, meane, by a True
 Church, a sound, pure, right belie-
 ving Church, hee as their Church, is
 the

*Ibid. præ-
fat. de nat.
Dei.*

rather *verax*: *Zanchie* explicates the terme, whiles he joines *veram* & *param* together; so as in this construction, it is no true Church that is an unsound one; as if truth of existence were all one with truth of doctrine: In this sense, whosoever shall say the Church of Rome is a true Church, I say he calls evil good; and is no better than a teacher of lies. But, if we measure the true being of a visible Church, by the direct maintenance of fundamentall principles, though by consequences indirectly overturned; and by the possession of the word of God, and his Sacraments, though not without foule adulterations; what judicious Christian can but with mee, subscribe to learned *Zanchius*, that
the

the Church of Rome hath yet the
 true visibilitie of a Church of
 Christ: what should I need to
 press the latitude, and multiplicity
 of sense of the word, of Church;
 there is no one term that I know
 in all use of speech, so various; If,
 in a large sense, it be taken to com-
 prehend the society of all that pro-
 fesse Christian Religion, through
 the whole world, howsoever im-
 purd, who can denie this title to
 the Roman? If, in a strict sense, it
 be taken (as it is by Zanchine here,
 and all those Divines who refuse
 to give this stile to the Synagogue
 of Rome) for the company of a
 leg of faithfull men gathered into
 one mystical bodie under one
 head, Christ, washed by his blood,
 justified by his merits, sanctified
 by

by his Spirit; conſcionable wait-
 ing upon the true ordinances of
 God, in his pure Word, and holie
 Sacraments, who can be ſo thank-
 leſſes to give this title to the Ro-
 man Church: Both theſe ſenten-
 ces, then, are equally true, If the
 Church of Rome is yet a true Church,
 in the firſt ſenſe; The Church of Rome
 long ſince ceaſed to be a true Church
 in the ſecond. As theſe friendly ſoul-
 diers therefore, of old, ſaid to their
 fellowes (ſay what you will) why fight
 we? ſay, ſay, deare brethren, for
 Gods ſake, for his Churches ſake,
 for your ſoules ſake, ſay theſe ba-
 ſe and unprofitable litigious o-
 pinions, on both ſides, burning gri-
 pous Turne your Swords into
 Sickles and cut downe the ſtrake
 conſpirers of the Roman Church;
 and

and your Speades into Mattocks,
 to beat downe the walls of this
 mysticall Babylon; There are ene-
 mies enow abroad, Let us bee
 friends at home; But if our sence
 be the same, you will aske, why
 our termes varie, and why wee
 have chosen to fall upon that ma-
 ner of expression, which gives ad-
 vantage to the Adversarie, offence
 to our owne? Christian Reader,
 let me beseech thee, in the bowels
 of Christ, to weigh well this mat-
 ter, and then tell me why such of-
 fence, such advantage should bee
 rather given by my words, than
 by the same words, in the mouth
 of Luther, of Calvin, of Zanchie, Ju-
 nine, Plessee, Hooker, Andrewes,
 Field, Crakenthorpe, Bedel, and that
 whole cloud of learned and pi-
 ous

our Authors, who have, without
 exceptiō, used the same language?
 And why more by my words,
 now, than twentie yeares agoe, at
 which time I published the same
 truth, in a more full and liberall ex-
 pression. VVise and charitable
 Christians may not be apt to take
 offence where none is given. As
 for anie advantage that is hereby
 given to the Adversaries, they
 may put it in their eye, and see ne-
 ver the worse. Loe, say they,
 we are of the true visible Church;
 this is enough for us; why are we
 forsaken, why are we persecuted,
 why are we solicited to a change?
 Alas, poore soules, doe they not
 know, that Hypocrites, leud per-
 sons, reprobates, are no lesse mem-
 bers of the true visible Church?
 what

what gaine they by this but a deeper damnation? To what purpose did the Iewes crie, *The Temple of the Lord*, whiles they despigh-
 ted the Lord of that Temple? Is the sea-weed ever the lesse vile, be-
 cause it is dragd up together with good fish? They are of the visible Church, such as it is; what is this but to say, they are neither Iewes, nor Turkes, nor Pagans, but mis-
 beleevers, damnable hereticall in opinion, shamefullie idolatrous in practice; Let them make their best of this just Elogie; and triumph in this style; may we never prosper if we envie them this glorie: Our care shall be, that, besides the Church sensible, (as *Zuinglius* distinguisheth) we may be of the Church spirituall; and not resting
 in

*Epist. 1. 2.
 resp. ad Ca-
 tabaptist.*

in a fruitlesse visibilitie, wee may finde our selves livelie limbes of the mystical body of *Christ*; which onelie condition shall give us a true right to heaven; whiles fashionable profession, in vain cries, *Lord, Lord*, and is barred out of those blessed gates, with an, *I know you not*.

Neither may the Reader think, that I affect to goe by-waies of speech: no, I had not taken this path, unlesse I had found it both more beaten, and fairer: I am not so unwise, to teach the Adversarie what disadvantage I conceive to be given to our most just cause, by the other manner of explication. Let it suffice to say, that this form of defence more fully stops the adversaries mouth in those two
maine

maine and envious scandals,
 which hee casts upon our holy
 Religion, Defection from the
 Church, and Innovation; than
 which, no suggestion hath wont
 to bee more prevalent with
 weake, and ungrounded hearts,
 what wee further win by this,
 not more charitable, than safe
Tenet, I had rather it should be
 silently conceived by the judi-
 cious, then blazoned by my
 free penne; shortly, in this state
 of the question, our gaine is as
 cleare, as the Adversaries losse:
 our ancient Truth triumphes
 over their upstart errors, our
 charitie over their mercilesse pre-
 sumptions; Feare not therefore,
 deare brethren, where there is

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no

no roome for danger; Suspect
 not fraud where there is no-
 thing but plaine, honest, sim-
 plicitie of intentions; censure
 not where there is the same
 Truth, clad in a different, but
 more easie habite of words;
 But if any mans fervent zeale
 shall rather draw him to the li-
 king of that other, rougher, and
 harder way, so as in the meane
 time he keepe within the bounds
 of Christian charitie, I taxe him
 not; let everie man abound in
 his owne sense; Onely let our
 hearts, and tongues, and hands,
 conspire together in peace with
 our selves, in warre with our
 common enemies.

21 This same have I (Right Ho-

on

nou-

nourable) in a desire of peace,
 poured out my selfe into a plaine
 explication, and easie accordance:
 Those whom I strive to, satisfie,
 are onely mis-takers; whose
 censures, if some man would
 have either laught out, or despi-
 sed, yet I have condescended to
 take off by a serious deprecati-
 on, and just defence.

It is an unreasonable motion
 to request mindes prepossessed
 with prejudice to heare reason;
 Whole Volumes are nothing to
 such as have contented them-
 selves onely to take up opini-
 ons upon trust, and will hold
 them, because they know where
 they had them: In vaine should
 I spend my selfe in beating up-

on such anviles ; but for those
 ingenuous Christians, which
 will hold an eare open for ju-
 stice, and truth, I have said e-
 nough, if ought at all needed.

Alas, my Lord, I see and
 grieve to see it; It is my Rochet
 that hath offended, and not I;
 In another habit, I, long since,
 published this, and more, with-
 out dislike; It is this colour of
 innocence that hath bleared some
 over-tender eyes; Wherein I
 know not whether I should
 more pittie their errour, or ap-
 plaud my owne sufferings; al-
 though I may not say with the
 Psalmist, *What hath the righteous*
done? Let mee (I beseech your
 Lordship) upon this occasion,
 have

ave leave to give a little vent to
my just griefe in this point.

The other day I fell upon a
Latine Pamphlet, homely for
style, tedious for length, zealous
ly uncharitable for stuffe, where
in the Author (ironely wise in
this, that hee would bee un-
knowne) in a grave fiercenesse
lies in the face of our English
Prelacies, not so much inveigh-
ing against their persons, (which
hee could bee content to reve-
rence) as their verie places. I
plest my selfe to see the case so
alter'd: hitherto fore, the Person
did not goe bare off maner
places from the function, now
the verie function wounds the
person: and what else art yee,
nob C 3 when

when that which should com-
 mand respect, brands us? What
 blacke Art hath raised up this
 spirit of *Arius* from his pit? Wo
 is mee, that zeale should breed
 such monsters of conceit: It is
 the honour, the pompe, the
 wealth, the pleasure (hee saith)
 of the Episcopall Chaite that is
 gullie of the depravation of our
 Calling; and if himselfe were
 so overlayd with greatnesse, hee
 should suspect his owne fide-
 lie. Alas, poore man, at what
 distance doth hee see us? Fog-
 gie Ayre useth to represent eve-
 rie object farre bigger than it
 is. Our SAVIOUR in his tem-
 pation upon the Mount, had
 onely the glorie of those King-
 domes

domes showed to him, by that
subtile Spirit, not the cares, and
vexations; Right so are our dig-
nities exhibited to these envious
beholders; Little doe these men
see the toyles, and anxieties that
attend this supposedly-pleasing
eminence.

All the revenge that I would
wish to this uncharitable Cen-
surer, should bee this, that hee
might bee but for a while ad-
judged to this so glorious seate
of mine; that so his experience
might taste the bewitching plea-
sures of this envied greatnesse;
hee should well finde more dan-
ger of being over-spent with
worke, than of languishing with
ease and delicacie.

For mee I need not appeale
 to Heaven : Eyes enow can wit-
 nesse how few free houres I
 have enjoyed, since I put on these
 Robes of sacred honour. In so
 much as I could finde in my
 heart, with holy *Gregorie*, to
 complaine of my change ; were
 it not, that I see these publique
 troubles are so many acceptable
 services to my G O D, whose
 glorie is the end of my being :
 Certainly, my Lord, if none but
 earthly respects should sway me,
 I should heartily wish to change
 this Pallace (which the Provi-
 dence of G O D, and the boun-
 tie of my gracious Sovereigne
 hath put mee into) for my qui-
 et Cell at *Waltham*, where I had
 so

so sweet leasure to enjoy God,
 your Lordship, and my selfe :
 But I have followed the calling
 of my G O D, to whose service
 I am willingly sacrificed; and
 must now, in an holy obedi-
 ence to his Divine Majestie,
 with what cheerefulnesse I may,
 ride out all the stormes of en-
 vie, which unavoidably will a-
 light upon the least appearance
 of a conceived greatnesse; in the
 meane time, what ever I may
 seeme to others, I was never less
 in my owne apprehensions; and,
 were it not for this attendance
 of envie, could not yeeld my
 selfe any whit greater than I was;
 what ever I am, that good God
 of mine, make mee faithfull to
 him;

him; and compose the unquiet
spirits of men, to a conscionable
care of the publique peace; with
which prayer, together with the
apprecation of all happinesse to
your Lordship, and all yours, I
take leave and am

Your Lordships truly de-

voted in all hearty

observance and

dutie,

Wm. Exon.

God bless you
or Iustfull to
him;

